



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://latchildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, April 6, 2015

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING (15-1622)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

1. Call to Order. (15-1384)

Present: Commissioner Geneva Berger, Commissioner Candace Cooper,
Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen,
Commissioner Sunny Kang, Commissioner John Kim,
Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin, Commissioner
Jacquelyn McCroskey, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Commissioner
Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, Vice Chair Carol O. Biondi and
Vice Chair Sydney Kamlager

Excused: Commissioner Wendy B. Smith

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2. Introductions of the April 6, 2015 meeting attendees. (15-1385)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the April 6, 2015 Meeting Agenda. (15-1386)

**On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Seipel
(Commissioners Kang, Smith, and Olivas being absent), the Commission
approved this item.**

4. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of March 16, 2015. (15-1387)

**On motion of Commissioner Seipel, seconded by Commissioner Sorkin
(Commissioners Kang, Smith, and Olivas being absent), the March 16, 2015
Minutes were approved with the following correction to be noted on**

Item No. 5, page 4, Paragraph No. 2 to read: "In 2007, Los Angeles County had 7,500 foster homes equipped with ~~4,800~~ 18,000 beds."

Attachments: [SEE SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

5. Vice Chair's report for April 6, 2015. (15-1388)

Vice Chair Kamlager reported on the following:

- **Commissioner input for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Strategic Plan is due April 7, 2014. Comments can be emailed to staff and they will forward to the DCFS**
- **The Health Integration Work Group released the draft report on the Health Agency.**
 - **The report was emailed to the Commission and is available on the Health Integration website: priorities.lacounty.gov/health**
 - **Commissioners can submit written comments to: healthintegration@lacounty.gov and will be accepted through May 15, 2015; please copy Commission staff if submitting a written comment.**
- **Last week, staff emailed information regarding a meeting arranged by Commissioner Cooper with the new Presiding Judge, Michael Levanas of the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court. Please let staff know if you are interested in attending the meeting scheduled for April 9, 2015 at 10:30 a.m.**
- **The Whole Child and First 5 LA would be presenting Dr. Bruce Perry and The Impact of Child Abuse on Brain Development—What does Neuroscience Research Tell Us? This Symposium will take place at the Pacific Palms Resort in the City of Industry on Monday, June 1, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**
- **The 3rd Annual Resource Fair for Foster and Transitioned Aged Youth (hosted by Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation) is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at 2249 South Harvard Boulevard, in Los Angeles.**
- **The Annual Special Needs Network Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for Friday, April 10, 2015 at the California African American Museum and will feature discussion on Proposition 63**

and action taken on Mental Health funding.

At the conclusion of the Vice Chair's Report, the Commission unanimously approved to write a response to the Health Integration Work Group regarding the Health Integration and draft report on the Health Agency, and place the letter on the May 4, 2015 Commission for Children and Families' Regular Meeting Agenda.

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Kang, Smith and Olivas being absent), the Commission accepted the Vice Chair's report.

- 6. Department of Children and Family Services Director's Report for April 6, 2015 by Philip Browning, Director. (15-1389)**

Director Browning reported on the following:

- An article published, Sunday April 5, 2015, by the Los Angeles Times has brought media attention to Group Homes in California. The Department of Children and Families Services' (DCFS) primary emphasis has been on safety within the Group Homes. The Board of Supervisors (Board) has been proactive in providing additional resources and monitoring staff for DCFS, and a number of reviews have focused on the financial aspects of these Group Homes. In the past, DCFS became aware of Group Home issues because of audits completed by the Auditor-Controller; however, through the reviews conducted by its monitoring staff, DCFS is now able to detect issues sooner. Although the full benefit of the new contract fiscal monitoring group has yet to be observed, initial reports have been promising.**
- Group Home bed vacancy remains a growing issue for DCFS as 12 Group Homes have closed within the past four years. DCFS's primary goal is to place children with relatives instead of a Group Home. DCFS is pleased that many children in foster care are being placed with relatives. Los Angeles County has the highest group of children placed with relatives at a rate of 52 percent.**
- On an annual basis, Karen Richardson and her staff monitor every Group Home and Foster Family Agency (FFA) by site visitation. Ms. Richardson and her team conduct comprehensive reviews that encompass client records, records of psychotropic medication use, descriptions of services provided, and a sample of personnel records.**

Additionally, the team interviews executive staff, operational staff, foster parents and foster youth. Each site is monitored diligently and a review is published for public information.

- DCFS is producing a preliminary financial report that analyzes expenditures from a preventative standpoint. Fiscal Staff from DCFS examine statements to verify that payments are being made to the State and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Many Group Homes have gone out of business because of financial programs not growing proportionately with the population of foster youth.**
- The State proposed changing the way congregate care is handled in California in order to minimize the number of foster youth in an out of home group setting. Currently, there is a structured Group Home concept based on a residential care level rating. A rating of 14 denotes the highest level of care, where children with the most challenging behaviors are placed. Rather than placing these children in a Group Home, the State is moving toward an emphasis on having them placed in a less structured environment such as a foster home with relatives.**
- In an effort to rebuild the number of foster homes lost, DCFS hosts public service announcements and recruitment events routinely. DCFS observes many challenges through recruiting new foster home participants, as the payments for foster parents are low and the risks associated are high. DCFS's attrition rate for new foster homes is four percent during the first year. It is important to note that a significant number of foster homes have been lost due to the decline in the population of foster children in the last six years.**
- The State Administration is holding an assembly hearing on April 7, 2015 to discuss the additional \$30.2 million requested by the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) to improve foster care recruitment and retention. The additional funding will help Counties identify, develop, and retain foster homes.**
- Director Browning provided testimony regarding information on Los Angeles County at the March 25, 2015 assembly hearing. The Board has taken a support position regarding the issue of foster care recruitment and retention.**
- The budget for the County will be presented on Tuesday, April 14, 2015. DCFS gave a presentation to the Chief Executive Office requesting additional positions; however, with these additional positions, DCFS will still be over the ideal caseload per Social Worker.**

Since August of 2013, DCFS has hired 850 Social Workers; many of them are still in the training program and have not taken on a full caseload. When totaling the number of cases for every Children's Social Worker (CSW) with one case or more in all of the regional offices, DCFS's average caseload currently is 24 per CSW. Similar-sized jurisdictions suffering from a lawsuit or settlement have caseloads of 15 or below for their continuing Social Workers. In order to comply with the Katie A. panel's request, DCFS needs to have an average caseload of 15 or below. It is estimated that it would take an additional 1,000 staff in order to get DCFS to this average caseload capacity. The attrition rate for the County is eight percent for newly hired CSWs.

- DCFS nurses are tracking the number of foster youth taking psychotropic medication in Los Angeles County; however, a disconnect in the flow of information from State to County prevents quantifying the number of cases accurately. DCFS has data on the types of psychotropic medications prescribed to a child and approved by a judge; however, the data is limited as it does not show which of the prescriptions have actually been filled. The California Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) database includes the payment information on which prescriptions have been filled among the many prescribed which can help DCFS quantify the number of children on psychotropic medications.
- The State sent Counties a 180 page Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which if signed, would allow Counties to access the prescription payment information from the State's DHCS database. To expedite access to the records, Director Browning and County Counsel developed an alternative to the MOU that protects all parties. Currently, the document is being reviewed by DHCS Director, Jennifer Kent.
- The Board introduced a motion for the County of Los Angeles to opt-in and participate in the Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Funding Program. DCFS and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) have been working to identify the estimated 3,400 relatives who will qualify. A work group consisting of 35 staff members from DCFS and DPSS has been organized in Glendora, California to undertake the initial eligibility processes. The work group will be stationed in a conference room in order to allow staff to communicate with each other.

- Senior DCFS staff met with Senior DPSS staff in order to discuss potential scenarios and brainstorm complications regarding Medicaid eligibility. It was decided that staff from both departments need to be moved into one co located operation.
- DCFS collaborated with advocates and stake holders to develop a plain language brochure informing the 3,400 relatives about the ARC Funding Program. Mailers with ARC information will be distributed by April 16, 2015. ARC payments must be made by June 1, 2015.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Director Browning responded:

- Los Angeles is one of the few counties that has a contract with each one of the providers. The State licenses a provider who can take children, if the placement is made by a Social Service Agency. Descriptions of the types of services that will be provided and the dollar amounts that will be paid are detailed in each contract. The dollar amounts are the standard rates, which the State has already approved.
- The ARC application is a three-page document that asks simple questions, and is not as complicated as the eligibility process for CalWORKs. The relative has to apply to CalWORKs prior to applying for ARC. A support hotline has been set up to help answer applicants' questions. The goal is to have each application mailed back in a pre-stamped envelope to be processed by the eligibility work group.
- DCFS needs stakeholders to comment on the foster youth's quality of life issues in order to improve the "well-being" portion of DCFS' Strategic Plan. To keep children current with their service plan, Group Homes interview children to verify their views on safety and observe academic improvement records, medical records, and dental records. Service plan goals are specific to each individual child and are not uniform to every child.
- Group Home placement outside of Los Angeles County is a last resort for DCFS; however, certain situations, such as challenges associated with commercially sexually exploited children are better serviced by a California Community Care Licensed program residing outside of Los Angeles County's jurisdiction. Some resources in San Bernardino County are closer to where a family member of the child resides, especially in the Antelope Valley.

- Los Angeles County holds the highest percentage for monthly visits by social workers in the State at a 95 percent rate. The federal government has a standard of 90 percent.

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Smith and Olivas being absent), the Commission accepted Director Browning's report.

III. PRESENTATIONS

7. Update by the Office of Child Protection (OCP)

- Fesia Davenport, Interim Director, OCP (15-1390)

Fesia Davenport, Interim Director, from the Office of Child Protection (OCP) provided a brief background on the establishment of the OCP office. On June 10, 2014 the Board approved to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRC) and oversee a unified, Countywide child protection system. The OCP Office became fully operational on February 2, 2015 with the identification of an Interim Director and the assignment of staff.

The OCP mission includes leading a broad partnership that implements meaningful solutions to improve the lives of children and families.

The Board has already accomplished the followings:

- Operationalize the Office of Child Protection
- Develop a Countywide Mission Statement on Child safety
- Development and implementation and monitoring of a joint strategic plan (in progress)

The Mission Statement included input from all interested agencies and individuals including two (2) town hall meetings; one in Antelope Valley and the other in South Los Angeles.

- In Antelope Valley, the participants' focus was on child safety, then family and community.
- In South Los Angeles, the participant's focus was on family and community then safety of the child.

A survey was conducted among the participants on four different options. The option for geographic area presentation/supervisory district received a majority vote.

Ms. Davenport noted some of the issues with the initiatives of the OCP as follows:

Children's Social Worker Public Health Nurse Joint Visit Initiative

- **Joint visitation initiative which includes pairing a Public Health Nurse (PHN) with a Children's Social Worker (CSW) in child abuse/neglect investigations for all children under 24 months of age.**
- **New process includes referrals to Medical Hub by the PHN, when medically necessary.**

Environmental Scan

- **To include developing a reference guide on over 600 programs focused on child safety and well-being through collaborative partnerships involving a total of 25 County departments. The Department is in the process of segregating the information received.**

Data Sharing

- **Establishing a mechanism for electronically sharing information on adults suspected of child abuse/neglect in near real time across County departments to protect children from harm. This protocol will be finalized in the next 50 days.**

Psychotropic Medication

- **Enhancing oversight of psychotropic medication prescriptions for foster youth to ensure that non-pharmacological interventions are using best practice wherever feasible.**
- **Working with Department of Mental Health, the Court, DCFS, and Probation to automate the existing process to approve requests for prescriptions of psychotropic medication for foster and probation youth involves development of a new system called ePMA.**
- **The goal is to make sure Psychotropic Medication is the last resort.**

In response to questions posed by the Commissioners, Director Browning responded:

- **The Board approved that all children under 24 months of age will receive medical service if needed.**
- **Challenges arise with the implementation of the concept. A good strategy is to have meetings between the different groups involved and to discuss the best method of reaching the goal.**

The Commission has been very successful in communicating with the representatives and having representatives report to the Commission when required.

- A workgroup is in place on the issue of Psychotropic Medication, and Judge Nash and Judge Levanas have indicated they will participate in the judicial workgroup and assist with the implementation of the ePMA system.
- The Countywide Mission Statement is the (what) and the OCP Mission is the (how) to achieve the best result for the children.
- The leadership actively monitors each initiative for the effectiveness of its outcomes. For example, data from the matrix-driven joint nursing initiative is analyzed for program effectiveness, in order for the management to recommend improvements or decide to discontinue the program.

By common consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Olivas and Smith, being absent), the Commission accepted Ms. Davenport's update.

Attachments: [SEE SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)
 [SEE SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

8. Children's Data Network presentation on Infant's Cumulative Risk of Being Re-Reported to the Department of Children and Family Services.
 - Emily Putnam-Hornstein, Assistant Professor, University of Southern California School of Social Work & Co-Director, Children's Data Network (15-1391)

Ms. Putnam Hornstein provided brief updates on the following:

Transition Age report was funded by the Health Foundation through a grant application submitted by the Children's Data Network. The Children's Data Network is a university agency community collaborative that is housed at the USC School of Social Work funded by First 5 LA, and focuses on how to better use data received to provide better programs and policies for children.

Reports were released in Fall 2014 that addressed the cumulative risk of child welfare involvement in the County of Los Angeles. The reports highlighted the way the public generally thinks about child welfare involvement when a child was reported based on abuse and neglect,

and/or placed in foster care. The report is to provide child level understanding and based its data on children who were born in Los Angeles County from birth to age five, and how many children at some point reported on abuse or neglect, and/or entered a foster care. The report found that one in seven children born in Los Angeles County and in the State, have involvement with child protective services before Kindergarten.

The Children's Data Network website is interactive. The website provides, by a simple click on the subject of interest, a brief summary highlighting on how many children entered the system. The website also provides characteristics of the data acquired on children from birth to five years old. Information that can be utilized strategically to inform available service and where there is greater need for services.

A new report released during the Child Abuse Prevention Month described the study of 153,000 children who were born in the County of Los Angeles in 2006, and how many of those children were reported during the first year of life. The analyses focused specifically on infants who were reported for abuse or neglect, and what happened next in terms of child welfare involvement. The report noted that 78 percent of those infants were at home with mom or dad, or the custodial parent after the first report incident. Half of the infants who remained at home after the first report did experience a second incident report. The Child Protection System has the ability to open a case and provide formal services to roughly one in eight infants who remain at home, and it was noted that the Child Protection System has neither the legal authority, nor the capacity to serve all of the families. Fifty five percent of infants experience a second report, and there is speculation that these infants had great community based services. The report also noted that the birth records did not contribute to predicting the outcome of the infant.

Commissioner McCroskey commented that looking at the geographies, in some areas the incident report were disturbing, both for the early five years and one year period, and that it is very important for the communities to have an array of resources to support families in various ways.

Ms. Putnam Hornstein responded on the following questions posed by the Commission:

Data on the number of infants born with substance exposure has not been placed in the study, nor has it been determined if children have been detained.

Recognizing the challenges a family may have can be directly related to the child's developmental transition from the time the child is born to age five.

Commissioner Kim volunteered to work with the USC School of Social Work to identify the areas that lack resources for these families.

By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Smith and Olivas being absent), the Commission received and filed the report.

Attachments: [SEE SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)
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IV. DISCUSSION/APPROVAL

- 9.** Discussion and approval to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors on behalf of the Commission to support the Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study. (15-1396)

On motion of Commissioner Seipel, seconded by Vice Chair Biondi (Commissioners Smith and Olivas being absent), the Commission approved this item.

Attachments: [SEE SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

V. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

- 10.** Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (15-1392)

There were none.

Announcements

- 11.** Announcements for the meeting of April 6, 2015. (15-1393)

Vice Chair Kamlager made a recommendation to allow time for discussion at a future meeting to discuss and or take action on prior presentations of concern.

Commissioner Konigar-Macklin also suggested to have a follow-up discussion incorporating education to the school district on child sex trafficking.

Public Comment

- 12.** Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (15-1394)

Robert Rice, recently elected Chairman of the Board for Grandparents As Parents, introduced himself to the Commission and indicated that Grandparents As Parents has been working with the DCFS on kindred support services. He stated that this was the first time attending a Commission for Children and Families meeting, and found it to be very educational; and looks forward to continually working with DCFS and the Commission to help families through working with grandparents and relative caregivers that raise at risk youth.

Adjournment

- 13.** Adjournment for the meeting of April 6, 2015. (15-1395)

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.